

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Arthur H. Keller, July 20, 1894, with transcript

HELEN KELLER. Copy of a letter-press copy of a letter from ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL, to Helen Keller's father concerning Helen's education. July 20th, 1894. Dear Major Keller:

I must apologize for not writing you ere this regarding Helen, but I did not wish to make any suggestions until I had had an opportunity of talking with Helen herself and with Miss Sullivan.

Since my return we have been making arrangements for celebrating my father and mother's golden wedding, on the 19th (yesterday) and today I take the first opportunity of writing you.

I have had a long talk with Helen about herself so as to get her ideas concerning her own advancement. She expresses a strong desire to have her education continued in conjunction with seeing and hearing young ladies, and I think she is right.

I doubt the advisability of sending her to a school for the deaf, for she is already further advanced than any of our pupils. She would be at just as much disadvantage in a school for the deaf or the blind as she would be in any ordinary school, for she needs a special interpreter. Why not then send her to whatever may be the best private school for hearing and seeing young ladies.

I would advise you to consider first what may be best for Helen quite irrespective of expense. Having decided this point ascertain what the expense of carrying out the plan would be. Helen's friends will be glad to co-operate with you in carrying out whatever plan you may deem best for her future,

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I don't think you could do better than send her to Burham's 2 Classical School, Northampton, Mass., (the preparatory department to Smith's College). She would here be in a school that is recognized as one of the best young ladies' schools in the country, — and proximity to the Clarke Institution would be of special advantage.

If you think favorably of this I should be glad to make enquiries concerning the expense of sending Helen and Miss Sullivan to this school. Yours sincerely, ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL. P.S. I forwarded to you a copy of a note I addressed to Rev. G. G. Hole — but do not think I sent you a copy of his reply. I will ask Mr. McCurdy (my secretary) to forward a copy. In regard to Mr. Campbell's desire to have Helen visit England — I can say nothing. His object is to make money out of Helen for the benefit of his school. I think it would be better for Helen to visit Europe at some later period and under letter suspices. Messrs Wright and Henderson are anxious to have Helen go to their school in New York — which is to be opened this autumn. I am very favorably impressed with these gentlemen — and would be glad to help them in any way I can. Helen's presence in their school would undoubtedly help them — but I am doubtful whether it would be of equal benefit to Helen herself. Dr. Henderson I have no doubt would be considerable assistance to her — but my judgment inclines to the belief that a private school for hearing and seeing young ladies would be of more benefit to her.

3

Mrs. Somer's school (Mount Vernon Seminary) in Washington, D.C., where my own children go is a very good school. Then you might consider the preparatory schools attached to Vassar, Wellesly or Radcliffe Colleges (Harvard Annex). My preference would be for Burham's Classical School, Northampton, Mass. ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL